

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL CAPETOWM
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 3858

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, SF, SW
SUBJ: SWEDISH LABOR UNIONS PLANNING SYMPATHY ACTION AGAINST
UNILEVER

1. ON SEPTEMBER 27, THE STOCKHOLM PRESS REPORTED THAT SWEDISH LABOR UNIONS, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OF FACTORY WORKERS AND FOOD WORKERS, ARE PLANNING TO STAGE SYMPATHY ACTIONS DIRECTED AGAINST MULTINATIONAL UNILEVER FOR ITS REFUSAL TO RECOGNIZE A BLACK TRADE UNION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THE SWEDISH LABOR MOVEMENT WILL BE STAGING ACTIONS OF THAT KIND.

2. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, THE UNION UNILEVER REFUSES TO RECOGNIZE IS SWEET FOOD AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION (SFAWU) WITH WHICH OTHER COMPANIES IN THE REPUBLIC HAVE NEGOTIATED AND CONCLUDED LABOR CONTRACTS. THE ATTITUDE OF THE SWEDISH FOOD WORKERS UNION IS THAT THE SWEDISH FARMERS COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT, ONE OF THE NATION'S POPULAR DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENTS,
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SHOULD RECONSIDER ITS RELATIONS WITH UNILEVER IF THIS MULTINATIONAL COMPANY GOES ON SUPPORTING THE APARTHEID SYSTEM IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA.

3. THE SYMPATHY ACTIONS OF SWEDISH TRADE UNIONS WILL REPORT-EDLY TAKE THE FORM OF "VARIOUS MANIFESTATIONS OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES" ACCOMPANIED BY SHORT STRIKES. THE LEGAL

PROVISIONS GOVERNING ACTIONS OF THIS KIND ARE NOT QUITE CLEAR-CUT, BUT ON ONE OCCASION IN THE PAST FORMER SWEDISH LABOR MINISTER INGEMUND BENGTTSSON ALLEGEDLY REMARKED THAT "THERE IS NOTHING TO PREVENT SWEDISH LABOR ORGANIZATIONS FROM PARTICIPATING IN INTERNATIONALLY ORGANIZED SYMPATHY ACTIONS IN SUPPORT OF THEIR BROTHER ORGANIZATIONS ABROAD OR FROM GIVING EXPRESSION TO SOLIDARITY MANIFESTATIONS FOR THOSE SUBJECTED TO POLITICAL OPPRESSION OR FOR PERSONS WHO ARE OTHERWISE IN NEED OF INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT."

4. UNILEVER OWNS THE FOLLOWING COMPANIES IN SWEDEN: (A) NOVIA, LOCATED AT KRISTIANSTAD, WHICH PRODUCES SOFT DRINKS; (B) PIERRE ROBERT, LOCATED AT HELSINGBORG, A MANUFACTURER OF COSMETICS; (C) SUNLIGHT, BASED AT NYKOPING, MANUFACTURER OF WASHING COMPOUNDS AND SOAPS; (D) SCADA, AT LANDSKRONA, WHICH MAKES MISCELLANEOUS PLASTIC PRODUCTS. ALL THESE COMPANIES WILL REPORTEDLY BE THE DIRECT TARGETS OF APPROPRIATE ACTION ON THE PART OF THEIR PERSONNEL. UNILEVER IS ALSO CO-OWNER WITH THE SWEDISH FARMERS COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT OF TWO LARGE COMPANIES IN SWEDEN, NAMELY MARARINBOLAGET (MARGARINE CO.) AND GLACEBOLAGET (ICE CREAM CO.). THESE COMPANIES ENJOY A DOMINANT POSITION IN THE SWEDISH MARKET FOR MARGARINE AND ICE CREAM. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE EMPLOYEES OF THESE FIRMS WILL NOT PARTICIPATE DIRECTLY IN THE PLANNED LABOR UNION ACTIONS AGAINST UNILEVER. THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE PLANNED ANTI-UNILEVER CAMPAIGN WILL REPORTEDLY BE CONFINED TO THE DISSEMIN-

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ACTION OF LEAFLETS ON UNILEVER'S POLICY IN SOUTH AFRICA, AS OPPOSED TO POSSIBLE WORK STOPPAGES AT THE FOUR UNILEVER SUBSIDIARIES.

COMMENT: IT IS NOTED IN THIS CONNECTION THAT FM KARIN SODER, SPEAKING BEFORE UNGA ON SEPTEMBER 27, STRONGLY CONDEMNED SOUTH AFRICA AND SAID SWEDEN WOULD LIKE TO SEE VIGOROUS UN MEASURES AGAINST THE REPUBLIC FOR ITS APARTHEID POLICY AND THE STAND IT HAS TAKEN IN NAMIBIA. SHE EMPHASIZED THAT SWEDEN AND THE OTHER NORDIC COUNTRIES WOULD CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS TOWARD BRINGING ABOUT A DECISION IN THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL BANNING NEW INVESTMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA.

MARTENS

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